DIRECTIONS
A GOD[illegible] LIFE:
Com[illegible]ng at the LORDS TABLE.

Intended [illegible] for private use; now publiſhed for the good of thoſe who deſire the ſafety of their own Souls, and ſhall be pleaſed to make uſe hereof.

By *HENRY TOZER*, Mr. of Arts, and Fellow of *Exeter* Colledge in *Oxford*.

The Ninth Edition.

PSAL. 69. 33.
Seek ye after God and your ſouls ſhall live.

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TO THE
HONOURABLE
GENTLEMAN
Mr. *LORENZO CARY*,
Son to the R. Honourable
Vicount *FALKLAND*
Lord Deputy of *Ireland*.

Worthy Sir,

SInce the time that it first pleased Your Honourable Father to commend you unto the Religious government of this Colledge, wherein you now live, your carriage hath been so sweet and lovely, that it hath won, I

dare ſay, the heart of each member thereof to a readineſſe of reſpecting this your goodneſſe, as in word ſo in deed, according to their ſeveral places and dignities. Neither could I ſuffer my ſelf, ſtanding in a more near relation than any of the reſt unto you, to come ſhort in the performance of this office; Wherefore I here offer unto your religious meditation his enſuing Treatiſe, collected and compoſed firſt for private uſe, but now publiſhed, not to gain the applauſe of any (from which my own unworthineſſe ſufficiently checks me) but chiefly for theſe two reſpects: firſt to teſtifie that love, which I both owe unto you and am ready to make good. Secondly,

ly, and more principally, to invite you to a due consideration of those holy duties therein contained, that by a seasonable knowledge of the same, your actions may be the more carefully ordered, and Gods name in the faithful practise thereof more fully glorified. The subject is a matter not of humane learning, but of Gods service; and thereof a part without exception, the greatest; the due receiving of the holy Communion. A duty, I confess, better known, than well considered; more often thought on, than sincerely practised: if it were not so, bad actions would not be so commonly priviledged by the Greatnesse of the Agents, as now they are; but they to whom

God hath given moſt honour here, would ever think it their greateſt glorie to honour him moſt again by their faithful ſervice unto him. And good reaſon why they ſhould, if they remember that to whom God hath given moſt, of them he requireth moſt again; yea ſuch who have the precedencie af others in place and dignity, may do well to conſider, that, in making a conſcience of matters of Religion and leading their lives according to the Rules thereof, they do not only provide well for the ſalvation of their own ſouls, but give a good occaſion to others alſo, while they happily provoke them to the practiſe of the ſame duties by their good Examples:

which

which are ever held as lively precepts, and ſerve for a ſecret reproof to an ingennous inferiour, when he ſhall ſee himſelf defective in that, wherein his betters have gone before him. Let the Honourable and Mighty thus remember how far they ſhall honour God by a religious life, and then they cannot but acknowledge that it is their glorious freedom to be his humble Servants. Others, if they pleaſe, may take notice of this perſwaſion; and perhaps they would, if I were not unworthy to adviſe them: but now I ſpeak to you alone, whom I well know willing, as freely to make uſe of others help, ſo truly to accept of this from me. Your own happineſſe you muſt confeſs,

with

with thanks to God, that by his providence you live in that Society, whose Religion is as firm as undefiled, where you cannot say, you want the rule either of loving precepts or example; according unto which you have already joyned with the rest in a religious communicating at the Lords table. My desire is to perswade you to a constant perseverance in what you have so well begun; that so devoting your tender years, with those that follow, to the service of the Almighty, you may again from him receive and fully enjoy, his daily blessings, which doth ever attend on those that truly seek him. Some Meditation, which perhaps may serve for your directions, I here present

unto

unto your view, in which I freely acknowledge almoſt nothing mine (to prevent the cenſure of curious Readers) but only the labour of compoſing; this I now commend to you, and you unto the bleſſed providence of the moſt Higheſt, reſting ever

Yours truly

in the Lord:

HENRY TOZER.

Mary Rogers

DIRECTIONS For The due Receiving of the Holy Communion.

CHAP. I.

What a Sacrament is, and how many there be.

A Sacrament is an outward visible signe of an inward and invisible grace ordained by God, whereby he doth seal unto us his covenant

venant of grace made in the bloud of Christ, and we again testifie our faith and piety towards him: so that it is both a sign in respect of the thing signified, and a seal, in respect of the covenant sealed unto us. The word Sacrament doth properly signifie an oath, whereby Souldiers bound themselves unto their General; whence it is taken to signifie that obligation, whereby we tye our selves to the blessed and sweet service of Jesus Christ: for hereby we, as Christs Souldiers, first bind our selves by promise of obedience to fight under the Lords banner against the world, the flesh and the Devil; Secondly, we put

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on the cogniſance and Armes, the Colours, and marks, of Ghriſt, by profeſſing our faith in him, that ſo it may appear unto the world to whom we do belong.

Now Sacraments are of two ſorts.

Firſt, Of the Old Teſtament, which were two.

Firſt, Circumciſion.

Secondly, The Paſſeover.

The Firſt was ordained for a ſign of entrance into the Covenant.

The Second for an aſſuance of confirmation of, and continuance in the ſame: both which are now aboliſhed, and in ſtead of them we now have the Sacraments of the New Teſtament, which are

likewiſe two.

Firſt, Baptiſm anſwereble to Circumciſion.

Secondly, The Lords Supper to the Paſſeover: both ſignified by that water and blood, which iſſued out of the ſide of Chriſt, when it was pierced by the Souldiers on the Croſſe. Of theſe the firſt is called the Sacrament of our Nativity or entrance, becauſe by it we are aſſured that we are received into the Covenant of Grace, and ſo are regenerate and belong to the flock of Chriſt: the ſecond is called the Sacrament of our growth and perſeverance, whereby we grow up in Chriſt, and are aſſured that we ſhall be ſtill kept in this eſtate.

eſtate. So that both are neceſſary; the one to aſſure us of our entrance into, and the other of our continuance in, the eſtate of Grace; for although that Grace once conferr'd cannot be loſt, yet our aſſurance doth often want ſtrengthning, by reaſon of our manifold temptations, againſt which we are comforted by the remembrance of Chriſts death and paſſion: which doth alſo teach us why the Sacrament of Baptiſm is received but once, and the Lords Supper often; becauſe our birth is ſignified by our Baptiſm, and we can be born but once; but we daily ſtand in need of food and ſtrengthning, and there-

fore

fore we often receive the Supper of the Lord, that our ſouls may be nouriſhed unto life everlaſting.

Chap. II.

What the Lords ſupper is.

That we may rightly underſtand the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, we muſt know two things.

1. What it is.
2. What belongs to the due receiving of it.

For the Firſt: the Lords Supper is a Sacrament, conſiſting of Bread and Wine lawfully conſecrated and diſtributed

ſtributed: inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf for a continual remembrance of the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt, and the benefits which we receive thereby.

This inſtitution was at Chriſts laſt Supper after he had eaten the Paſſeover with his Diſciples; ſo that it is called a Supper in reſpect of the time of the inſtitution; and the Lords Supper in reſpect of the Author, the Lord Chriſt: as alſo in reſpect of the end thereof, which is partly to ſet forth the Lords Death, and the ſpiritual food therein received, namely the body and bloud of Chriſt himſelf.

In this Sacrament we muſt con-

conſider two things.

1. The parts.
2. The end.

The parts are two,

Fitſt, The outward Signs.

Secondly, The Thing ſignified.

The Signs are either repreſenting, namely, the Elements themſelves: or applying Signs, which are the actions about thoſe Elements.

The Elements are two, Bread and Wine: not Bread only, but both; according to Chriſts inſtitution: and that aſunder, not the Bread dipt in the Wine, as ſome will have it; becauſe Chriſts bloud was ſhed out of his body for our ſins, and we are to receive theſe Signs as repreſenting

ſenting Chriſt, not whole, but wounded and pierced.

Now Chriſt choſe theſe Elements before any other, becauſe they beſt ſerve to ſet forth Chriſts Body and Bloud; for as bread by diverſs breakings and preſſings comes to be perfect, yea the chiefeſt food of our bodies, ſtill giving a good reliſh, when other things do not, and is alſo more common to all, than any other: So the body of Chriſt by many torments was made the cheif nouriſhment of our ſouls, remaining alwaies moſt ſweet and pleaſant, and common to all that can receive him by Faith; and as Wine doth cheriſh and comfort us, ſatisfie our thirſt,

purge

purge away many corrupt humours, and maketh us bold and adventurous: so the bloud of Christ revives and glads our drooping souls, satisfieth our spiritual thirst, purgeth us from all our sins, and makes us couragious against all fear of our enemy the Devil: Again, as Bread is made of many grains into one loaf, and Wine of many grapes into one cup: so we partaking thereof, and of Christ, by faith are made one with him as our head, and also one among our selves as members of his body; thus of the Elements.

The Actions in this Sacrament are of two sorts.

1. Of the Minister.

2. Of

2. Of the Communicants.

The Actions of the Minister are these.

1. Setting apart.

2. Blessing of the Elements, whereby is signified, that Christ Jesus was set apart and sanctified for us, as it is *John* 17. 19.

3. Breaking and powring out. And

4. Distributing to the Communicants; whereby is signified that Christs Body was crucified, and his Blood shed, and that the benefits thereof are offered unto us, if we have faith to receive them, as it is *John* 3. 15. *He was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should have life everlasting.*

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The Actions of the Communicants are two.

1. Taking.
2. Eating and drinking.

By which is signified that they, which receive benefit by Christ, must receive him by faith applying his merits to their own souls, as *John* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.*

Thus of the signs; the thing signified is the Body and Bloud of Christ, with the benefits, which we receive thereby; namely the strengthning and refreshing of our souls in the remission of our sins: and this we receive, not of the Minister (for he gives

gives only the ſigns) but of God himſelf, apprehending the ſame by our faith; for Chriſt is not ſignifi'd in theſe ſigns as in a picture, but exhibited unto us; being himſelf preſent in the Sacrament, though not corporally to the Bread and Wine, yet ſpiritually to our faith; for though *his Body be in Heaven and muſt there remain until the laſt day*, as it is Acts 3. 2. yet we may feed on him ſpiritually by faith, by applying his death and paſſion untoour ſinful ſouls: ſo that there is one union between Chriſt and the Elements, which is Symbolical; and another between Chriſt and us, which is ſpiritual and real.

The

The ends of this Sacrament are twofold.

1. In repect of others.

2. In reſpect of our ſelves.

In reſpect of others, to teſtifie unto them that faith which we profeſſe; that ſo they ſeeing our readineſſe herein, may have their hearts alſo ſtirred up to ſuch good duties.

In reſpect of our ſelves it concerns, either what we have received from, or what we are to return to God. In the firſt reſpect it ſerveth.

First for remembrance; Namely, of the death of Christ; for, *as often as we receive this, we ſhew the Lords death*

death till I come, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Secondly, for confirmation unto us; and that, both of our union amongst our selves; as 1 Cor. 10. 17. *For we being many are one Bread and one Body, for we all partake of one Bread*: as also of our Communion with Christ; for as the Bread and Wine are turned into the substance of our bodies; so we by faith are united unto Christ, and made flesh of his flesh; for *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*, Joh. 9. 55. and for this cause it is called the Communion.

In the second respect concerning that which we are to return unto God, it serves

to testifie our thankfulness to God for his mercy in giving us his Son, and in him all things, and assuring us thereof, by this Seal: which we cannot but do, when we consider the torments that he enduted for our sinnes, which were indeed the very nailes and spear that pierced him: and for this cause it is called the Eucharist, because in it we offer up our thanks unto God; and so also it may be called a Sacrifice, not that we do herein offer up Christ unto God, (for Christ himself at once finished this offering of his Body on the Cross) but because we offer up our thankful hearts unto God for his mercy

mercy in Christ, so that it is a sacrifice, not of Christ but of our thankfulness.

Chap. III.

The necessity of receiving the Lords Supper.

That we may receive this Sacrament as we ought, we must consider two things, 1. the Necessity; 2. the right manner of receiving the same.

As for the first, we must know that it is not a thing indifferent for us to receive, or not to receive at our pleasure, but that we ought to do it (though not every Sabbath after the custome observed in the Primitive

Church, yet without fail, as often as occaſion is offered, according to the example of thoſe in the *Acts, who continued ſtedfaſt in breaking of bread*, Acts 2. 42.

The neceſſity of which duty will further appear, if we conſider theſe two things. 1. the principal cauſe, which often keeps us from it; 2. the motives, which may draw us unto it.

Firſt, that which makes us backward in the performance of it, is queſtionleſs the policy of our Arch-enemy, the Divil; who ſtrives by all means to draw us away, either by a careleſs neglect of our chiefeſt good, to feed rather on our own fooliſh

fooliſh imaginations (as he did them in the Goſpel, who had rather *ſee their grounds, or prove their Oxen, than taſt of that Supper* to which they were invited, *Luk.* 14. 18, 19.) or elſe by a timorous fearfulneſs of our own unworthineſs to approach unto ſo holy a banquet, as this is. And truly if we could but ſee that this is his doing, we would by all meanes ſtrive againſt his temptations; for, who amongſt us would not endeavour to the utmoſt, ſo far to reſiſt his temporal enemy, as that he ſhould not be able to hurt him either in body or in goods? and ſhall we be more careful for the preſervation

of earthly bodies, than of our heavenly ſouls, which Chriſt Jeſus hath redeemed by his precious blood? God forbid; we muſt know that GOD expects more at our hands, and that our ſouls are never ſo ſafe, as when they are in greateſt oppoſition, and do that which is moſt diſpleaſing unto our chiefeſt enemy, the Devil: for the more we pleaſe him, the leſs we pleaſe God, and the nearer we are to him, the farther we are from God.

The motives which may draw us to the performance of this duty, are taken from a due conſideration of theſe two things. 1. who it is which inviteth us unto it. 2. what

what be the conſequents of receiving or not receiving.

He which inviteth us, is God himſelf, whoſe ordinance it is; and who requires it at our hands as a principal part of his ſervice: and therefore as often as we omit it, we may be ſure that we offend him; which he himſelf teſtified in threatning to *cut off that ſoul from his people, which ſhould forbear to keek the Paſſeover, Num.* 9. 13. and if ſo, then doubtleſs the neglect of this Sacrament, wherein Chriſt is ſo fully exhibited unto us, is very diſpleaſing unto him; which is alſo expreſt in the parable of the great Supper, *Luke* 14. 24. *None of theſe men which were*

bidden, ſhall taſt of my Supper: Why? becauſe they came not when they were invited; and if we refuſe to come when the Lord calls, who knows whether he will give us life until the next invitation? let us therefore take the Lords offer, while it is to day, leſt we be cut off before the morrow.

The next motive is taken from the conſequents, and that 1. of not receiving. If we receive not, we offer a twofold injury; the one to Chriſt, the other to our ſelves.

To Chriſt 2. waies. 1. in contemning his ordinance, who commanded his Diſciples to receive it. 1. *Cor.* 11.

24, and in them us. 2. in neglecting his love towards us; who (as a Father on his deathbed) in the night that he was betrayed, bequeathed this seal and pledge of his love unto us, which therefore ought to be right dear unto us, and at no time neglected when it is offered.

Again, if we receive not, we injure our selves, and that also two waies. 1. in respect of our name and profession; for if we come not when others do, we expose our selves to the censure of them, shewing that we are at least neglecters, if not contemners of GOD's Ordinance, *who will have all to come to it.* Mat. 26. 27. yea that we have not the

wife of a Chriſtian in us: for *whoſoever eateth not the fleſh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his blood, hath no life in him.* Jo. 6. 53. 2. we injure our ſelves from the benefits thereof, for the remembrance of Chriſts death and paſſion (if duly conſidered) cannot but be a great comfort unto us, which we put from us, as often as we omit the Lords Supper: and thus much we may aſſure our ſelves, that the Devil will be ready to take the leaſt occaſion to ſuggeſt other meditations unto us: and what a miſerable thing is it for us to be exerciſed in our own pleaſures, or ſuch like, when others, with whom we are bound to be preſent

are

are reverently gathered together, to the comfort of their own ſouls, to feed at the Lords Table? If we ſay that we are then exerciſed in other good duties, as reading the Word of God, or ſuch like, we muſt know that ſuch duties, (good in them ſelves) are not acceptable to God at ſuch times: and who knowes, ſeeing that herein we neglect the Lords ordinance, how far he will give the Devil leave to tempt us, and draw us away, even from thoſe duties alſo, to wicked imaginations.

2. The Conſequents of receiving cannot but invite us to a conſtant performance of this duty. Now theſe conſequents

ſequents reſpects either God, or our ſelves. That which reſpects God, is our duty of thankfulneſs and praiſe, which herein we offer unto him for his mercy: which is very pleaſant unto him, and neceſſary to be performed of us: becauſe *he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever towards them that fear him*: and how then can we but with *David*, *have our hearts ready to ſing and praiſe him with the beſt member that we have*, Pſal. 108. 1.

That which reſpects our ſelves, is the benefit which we receive thereby: which is twofold. 1. General. 2. more ſpecial. The General benefits, which we receive by

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the Lords Supper, are chiefly two.

1. A ſupply of all our wants, which we ſhall be ſure to have if we receive aright: for he, *which eateth the fleſh of Chriſt, ſhall never hunger, and he, which drinketh his blood, ſhall never thirſt*, as Chriſt himſelf hath promiſed: neither need we doubt of the truth hereof: for, *he is full of grace and truth*, Joh. 1. 14. *and in him dwelleth all fulneſs*, Col. 1. 19. and how then can we want any thing, if we poſſeſs him that hath all things?

2. An excellent rule to our whole life: for when we hereby conſider Gods great love unto us, we cannot (if there be any love or fear of God

God in us) but be careful to avoyd any thing, which may be displeasing unto him: so that hereby our bodies are made more obedient unto our souls, and our souls unto God.

The special benefits, which we receive by the Lords Supper, is in regard of our faith: and this again respects either our selves and others, or else our selves alone.

the first is, a testifying of our faith unto others: for hereby we both shew unto others the faith, which we profess, and also by our example stir them up to the performance of the same duty: in this respect therefore it is necessary whe should often receive.

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In the ſecond reſpect it is a confirmation and increaſe of that faith, which we have in us: wherein we are to endeavour by all means to continue, as St. *Paul* taught the Diſciples, *Acts* 14. 22. and beware that we fall not from our ſtedfaſtneſs, *but grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*: as it is 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. whereof we cannot but be careful, if we conſider our weakneſs; for we are ever ſubject to Apoſtaſie, and our faith is exceeding weak; as we may plainly ſee by our coldneſs in prayer and other good duties, by our fear of death, and by our love of this world: for the ſtrengthning

ning of which, Christ hath left unto us this Sacrament, as a special means conducing thereunto: for the Covenant which our faith taketh hold of, as it is contained in the Word of GOD, so it is sealed unto us by this Sacrament: and therefore Christ calls the Cup, *the Cup of the New Testament*, because it seals unto us the Covenant of GOD in the New Testament, accomplished in the shedding of Christs bloud. Now if a King should in pitty and compassion send a pardon under his Seal unto a poor distressed prisoner; would we not Judge that prisoner unworthy of the benefit thereof, if he should either wil-

wilfully refuſe it, or careleſly neglect it? Queſtionleſs we would: yet ſuch is our care before God, who, as King of Kings, hath ſealed unto us by this Sacrament a full remiſſion of all our ſins: if we therefore ſhall either willfully contemn, or at our pleaſure receive this pledge of his love, what can we exſpect at Gods hands, but a juſt removal of this his favour from us? Surely if we joyn the conſideration of our own weakneſs, which ſo much needeth help, with the meditation of Gods mercy, who ſo freely giveth it, we cannot but acknowledge our own meſery, if we neglect it: wherefore as we fear him,

and

and tender the good of our own ſouls, ler us be carefull in the due performance of this ſo weighty a buſineſs. But ſome are wont to frame theſe excuſes for their abſence.

1. The often receiving of this Sacrament may breed a diſeſteem thereof; and therefore it is ſafer ſometimes to abſtain. To which I anſwer, that in matters temporal (as pleaſures, and ſuch like) the often uſe may breed contempt, or at leaſt neglect, as it often doth, but in ſpiritual things it rather breeds a greater deſire, becauſe the more we feel and know the goodneſs of them, the more we ſeek after them; yet if it

ſo

ſo come to paſs, that by often receiving, we begin to undervalue the worth of it; we muſt conſider, that this neglect ariſeth not from the often uſe of the thing, but from our corrupt nature; for this Exerciſe is Gods own Ordinance; alwaies attended with his bleſſing, if rightly received; appointed as a meanes to ſtir up, and encreaſe our zeal and devotion, and therefore it is not likely that it ſhould hinder it. Let not this therefore keep us from the Lords Table, but let us rather come, that it may be a meanes to encreaſe our piety.

2. Some will ſay; I am not

not prepared, and therefore dare not come: but this indeed is no excuſe; for we muſt know that we ought to be alwaies prepared, our whole life ſhould be a continual preparation, as to all other good duties, ſo eſpecially to this; being *ever ready when the Lord ſhall call*, as our Saviour admoniſheth us, *Mat.* 24. 44.

3. Others will urge; I am to take a journey, or to be imployed in ſuch or ſuch a buſineſs; and therefore I cannot come: Well, if this journey or the like, muſt of neneceſſity be performed, thy excuſe is the ſafer; but if it may be any way avoided (as oftentimes it may) aſſure thy

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ſelf, this is to prefer thy own pleaſure before that which God commands: a day will certainly come, wherein we muſt give an account for the neglect of the leaſts of Gods Ordinances; and then it will be ſaid of ſuch Pretences, *Who required theſe things at thy hands?*

4. Some are wont to urge; I am not in charity, by reaſon of ſome wrong which hath been offered to me, and therefore I ought not to come. This indeed is an excuſe too common: but we muſt know, that if we be not in Charity, it is our own fault; for we ought to be in Charity, and ſtill to preſerve it: and certainly a miſera-

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ble thing it is, that we ſhould *prefer to feed on our own malice rather than to eat of the Lords Supper*; this is to hurt our ſelves more than we need, even to wrong our ſelves becauſe others have wronged us; we ſhould rather ſeek all means of reconciliation, that ſo we may remove thoſe impediments of Piety and Religion, and come the more freely to the Lords Table.

5. Some thus plead for their abſence; I am afraid to approach unto the Lord's Table by reaſon of mine infirmities, which are in me, and therefore I had rather ſometimes to refrain, leſt I come unworthily, which is a very fear-

fearful thing. It is ſo indeed, but we muſt conſider, that our ſtaying away is no comfort unto us in this caſe, but rather a means to make us worſe, and to pull down God Judgments upon us: we ſhould rather remember the goodneſs of God, that inviteth us, promiſing to *refreſh all thoſe that are heavy loaden with their ſins*, *Mat.* 11. 28. non putting us off for our infirmities: for *if there be a willing mind, he accepteh us according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not.* 1. *Cor.* 8. 12. though we want that perfection, which others have; yet, if we have a true deſire to be refreſhed by the merits

rits of Christ, and have a sincere heart before God, he will accept us according to this. Whensoever therefore the Devil shall tempt thee to draw thee away by the consideration of thy own infirmity, cheer up thy self with the comfort of the blind man in the Gospel, Mark. 10. 46. *Be of good comfort behold he calleth thee*: say unto thy self; Christ Jesus hath invited me, and hath promised to accept me, if my heart be sincere, humble, and willing: why then should the consideration of my infirmities keep me from it?

9. Others thus reply: I desire to receive, but I am conscious unto my self of some

some crying sinnes which I have committed before God, for which I have not yet sufficiently repented: and how then can I partake of this holy banquet in the presence of GOD? Is it so? art thou poor, and yet wilt thou refuse Gold when it is offered unto thee? who will then pitty thee for thy poverty? art thou desperately sick, and wilt thou not seek unto the Physitian for means of recovery? who will then bemoan thee for thy disease? Behold, Christ Jesus is the Physitian of thy soul; as well able to heal it of all it's diseases, as he did the bodies of those, which came unto him, of their infi-

ties: forsake not then this heavenly Physitian, but labour by a serious repentance to discharge thy conscience of those thy sins, and then come speedily unto him: it is the counsel of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 11. who biddeth us to *examine, and then eat*, not go away; first *examine, then eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup*: if thou say, I had rather stay till the next opportunity, that I may have the more time to repent; consider that the longer thou stayest, the more sins thou wilt run into, and then it will be so much the harder to repent as thou oughtest: and besides that, how doest thou know, whether God will give thee grace

grace and time to repent then or not? he hath promiſed indeed to have mercy upon a ſinner, at what time ſoever he ſhall repent; but he hath not promiſed to give him grace to repent when he will: Seek the Lord therefore while he offereth himſelf unto thee, that thou maiſt find mercy when thou ſeekeſt it.

Laſtly, ſome in a proud manner thus excuſe, (or rather juſtifie their abſence. I do already ſufficiently believe whatſoever is propoſed in the Word of God; and therefore what need have I to receive this Sacrament ſo often, as a ſeal to confirm my faith? it doth no way confer grace unto me; and

my faith is ſo firm, thrt I perſwade my ſelf I need not a ſeal to ſtrenthen it ſo much as others do, whoſe faith is weaker; wherefore I think that I may ſometimes forbear. But know, O vain man which thus diſputeſt with thy God, that this is Gods Ordinance, a principal part of his ſervice, which therefore ought diligently to be performed, though it did no way profit us, even becauſe God had commanded it: yea, when we have done all thoſe things which are commanded us, we muſt ſay that *we are unprofitable ſervants, we have done but that which was our duty to do*, Luke 17. 10. Beſides, is thy faith ſo

ſo ſtrong that it needs no fur-
ther ſtrengthening? doeſt
thou not dayly percieve in
thee a weakneſs of under-
ſtanding in matters of Piety
and Religion; a frailty in thy
memory, and a continual
diſorder in thy affections?
if not, know thus much, that
it is a miſery to want, but a
greater miſery not to be ſen-
ſible of our wants: and this
alſo know for a certain truth,
that when thou findeſt in
thy ſelf either none, or at
leaſtwiſe a ſmall deſire of
hearing Gods Word and re-
ceiving the Sacrament,
know, I ſay, that there is ſure-
ly ſome ſin or other in thee
not well repented of, which
clogeth thy ſoul, that it can-

not delight in thoſe ſpiritual exerciſes. Let us therefore indeavour to come to the Lords Table as often as we are invited; and when we do come, let us take heed that we come not for faſhion ſake, or to pleaſe men, or in any opinion of our own merit in this action; for this is not a celebration, but a prophanation of the Lords Ordinance; becauſe herein we ſerve not God, but our ſelves; which is a fearful thing; for God is not as man, that he ſhould be deceived; neither ſeeth he as man ſeeth, for man judgeth only according to the outward appearance, but God ſearcheth the very heart and reins; and will

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one day as certainly punish the prophaners of his Ordinance, as the contemners thereof. Wherefore, as we out in the first place to be fully perswaded of the necessity; so should we in the second by all means labour to come to the knowledge of the right manner of receiving; which is the next thing to be considered.

CHAP. IV.

The necessity of preparation.

HE which desires to receive at the Lords Table in a right manner, must make conscience of three duties,

which are necessarily to be performed:

1. A diligent preparation before.

2. A seasonable Meditation in the time of receiving.

3. A religious Practice after the same, in our five and conversation.

In the first (as before in the matter of receiving) we must take notice of two things ~~First, The Necessity.~~ Secondly, The right manner of Preparation.

The necessity will plainly appear, if we consider these two things. First, in whose presence it is, that we are to receive. Secondly, the danger which we bring on our

our ſelves by not being prepared.

As for the firſt, we are to ſit, and feed in the preſence of the Lord himſelf. Now if any, even the beſt of us, ſhould be invited by a King to his Princely Table, he would be careful to preſent himſelf (if he reverence his preſence) in the beſt manner that he could, putting on then eſpecally (if he have any better than other) his beſt apparel, and diſpoſing all things in the moſt decent order, that ſo he might be the better accepted: if ſo, with what fear and reverence ſhould we then approach unto the Table of this King of Kings, when he inviteth us to

who ſtand there ready, attended with his Angels to behold thoſe, which preſent themſelves; and will ſoon eſpy out that man, who ſhall dare to approach before him, not having on his wedding garment: and what can ſuch exſpect, but, with the man in the Goſpel, *a caſting out into utter darkneſs? Math.* 22. 13. Neither muſt we think to deceive the Lord with an hypocritical out-ſide; for he looketh not to the outward geſture only, but to the inward part of the ſoul: it is not ſo much a clean hand or curious attire which maketh us accepted of God, as a pure heart, and a cleanſed ſoul, adorned with faith and repentance;

tance; we may for a time deceive mortal men, such as our selves: but when the secrets of our hearts shall be made manifest, then shall our hypocrisie, as well as our negligence, be laid open to our destruction. Let us therefore humble our selves before God, and prepare our selves aright, that we may escape the danger which will otherwise fall upon us; which is the second thing to be considered in the Necessity of preparation. The danger of not being prepared is particularly set forth unto us by considering the offence, which we herein commit, and the reward thereof.

If we come unprepared, and

and ſo receive unworthily, our offence is no leſs than to be *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, as St. *Paul* ſaith, 1. *Cor.* 11. 27. that is, we offer ſpecial diſgrace and indignity unto Chriſt, in not receiving him with that reverence which we ought: which offence, as it is in it ſelf very heinous; ſo it draws on us a fearful puniſhment; for the Prophet *Jeremiah* hath pronounced him *accurſed that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, *Jerem.* 48. 10. and if it be ſo in other things, which are of leſs moment, what can we exſpect for the abuſing of this ſo weighty a matter? The Apoſtle ſetteth down at full but the

the fearfulneſs hereof; when he ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. that *he which eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation*: than which, what can be more terrible? Neither is the Scripture ſilent in ſhewing us the Judgments of God upon ſuch offenders; as we may plainly ſee, both in the Old Teſtament, in the ſuddain death of *Uzza*, for raſh touching of the Ark: and alſo in the New, in the *binding hand and foot, for want of the wedding garment.* Wherefore let the danger hereof move us to a careful preparation, before we preſume to come unto the Lords Table. But ſome may ſay: I perſwade

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my selfe, that I can by no means be worthy to receive this Sacrament, and how then can I receive worthily? it is true, if we truly consider our own unworthiness, and the excellency of this Sacrament, we cannot by any means become worthy thereof: but this must be our comfort, That he is truly worthy, whom God in mercy accepteth as worthy; and so he will us, if we come unto him in humility and reverence. Let us therefore, according to the Apostles rule, first *try and examine our selves, and then eat of this Supper*: which that we may the better do, we ought in the next place to take notice of the

right

right manner of preparation

Chap. V.

Concerning Examination, in general

For our better performance of the duty of preparation, we must be careful to set aside a convenient time before the Communion: wherein, laying aside all other impediments, we ought seriously to be exercised in three duties. 1. A diligent examination of our fitness, and worthiness to receive. 2. A comfortable premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive. 3. Earnest prayer

prayer unto God for a bleſſing upon our endeavours; that ſo we may be acceped to receive thoſe benefits.

In our examination we are to conſider, 1 To whom this duty belongs: 2. How it is to be performed.

The firſt we learn from S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11.28. who biddeth *every man to try and examine himſelf*: ſo that we our ſelves are to examine our ſelves. Indeed the Miniſters of the word of God, and all ſuch, to whom God hath committed the charge and care of others, ought carefully to try and examine thoſe, which belong unto them; that ſo they may be more fit: and inferiours ought alſo willingly to ſubmit themſelves

ſelves unto their tryal: yea, if it be not offered, to ſeek their help when they doubt of any thing; that ſo by their directions they may the more cheerfully go on. Theſe are duties, which God requires at the hands of all, the neglect whereof will one day fall heavy upon thoſe, which ſhall fail in the due performance thereof. Yet this is not ſufficient; for we are, for the moſt part, full of hypocriſie, ready to hide our ſins from others; yea we are ſo witty in iniquity, that we can behave our ſelves ſo ſmoothly, in reſpect of the outward ſhew, that others ſhall find no fault in us at all; though notwithſtanding our conſciences do all the

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while accuse us of some sins lurking within us: wherefore we are commanded also to try and examine every man himself in particular.

This Examination must be twofold. First, General. Secondly, Particular. In the first we must examine our selves in these two things. 1. Whether we be in the number of the faithful or not; which is very needful to be considered, otherwise we partake in vain: for as our bodies can receive no nourishing and strengthning from the food which we daily receive, unless they have some life in them before: so neither can our souls, if they be void of the life of grace,

receive

receive any comfort by this ſpritual food in the Lords Supper; which doth continue and encraſe life, where it finds it: but works none, where there is none before. Let us therefore in the firſt place diligenly try whether Chriſt be in us or not; of which we ſhall the more fully aſſure our ſelves, if we can find this perſwaſion in us, that we (as our fore-fathers were) *are ſtrangers and pilgrims here*, *Heb.* 11. 13. *looking for a city* (*as Abraham* did) *which had foundations, whoſe builder & maker is God*; and that we are *made free from the bondage of ſin by the Son of God, Chriſt Jeſus*, *Joh.* 8. 26. and ſo with *David*, *put out*

whole

whole truſt and reply only on his mercy. Pſal. 52. 9, 2. We are to make tryal of our readineſs, whether we be willing and have a deſire to partake of the Lords Supper or no. A willing mind God required of thoſe, which *offered any thing for the building of the Tabernacle:* as it is *Exod. 25. 2:* and of thoſe, *which offered any burnt offerings*, *Levit. 19. 5.* If ſo in theſe, which were but ſhadows of things to come; much more doth he exſpect it at our hands in the performance of this duty, which is the ſubſtance it ſelf. Neither yet let us here deceive our ſelves, thinking that a bare conſent and willing mind is ſufficient; it is

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an hungry desire and appetite, as well as willingness to receive meat offered; yea that especially, which testifieth a good disposition in the Stomack: and God requireth in all his service, (therefore in this also) that *we serve him with all our heart, and with all our soul, Deut.* 10. 12. and *blessed are they, which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Mat.* 5. 6. For want of this desire it is, that many, when they come to the Lords Table are never the better; because God, as he inviteth, so he feedeth none but those that *hunger and thirst, Isaiah* 55. 1. Let us therefore try and examine our selves whether

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we can say with *David*, *Psal.* 42. 1. *Like as the Hart desireth the water brooks; so longeth my soul after thee, O God: my soul is a thirst for God, yea even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?* If we can find this desire in us, then happy are we: if not, let us humble our selves before God and beseech him to work and stir up in us the good motions of his spirit, that so we may attain to some measure of this thirst; and from that go on farther to a particular examination of our fitness to receive.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

The Examination of our Knowledge.

IN our particular Examination, (becauſe we are dull and ignorant in matters that concern our Salvation, and alſo have, and do often offend both God and our neighbours; all which are hinderances to the due performance of this duty) we muſt examine our ſelves in thoſe particulars, which concern both our information in matters which we ſhould underſtand; and our reconciliation with thoſe, whom we have offended. That

That which concerns our information, is a good and wholesome knowledge of those things, which God hath revealed unto us; which is so necessary, that it is the very ground of all our service to God: for how can we do the will of God aright, if we know it not? *Surely that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good*, saith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 16. 2. and therefore *God will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1. *Tim.* 2. 6. without which we can reap no comfort unto our selves in any thing that we do; but are as dead men: for *this* (and this only) *is life eternal, that we know of God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*,

Joh.

Joh. 17. 3. So that without it there is no life: and hence it is that the Lord himself complains, *Hos.* 4. 6. *My people are perished for lack of knowledge*: and hence it comes to pass, that many receive this Sacrament without any benefit unto themselves, because they are not able to discern of it aright. We should therefore all our life long carefully exercise our selves in the Word of God, that so, when we shall come to examine our selves concerning our knowledge, we may the more easily, and with the greater comfort, try our fitness in this respect; whether we have attained to a competent measure of knowledge

in the grounds of Religion or not. Which that we may the better do, we are to make tryal of a twofold Knowledge, which we ought to have: The one concerning God, the other concerning Man.

Concerning God, we are to know, That there is but one, only wise and true God, subsisting in three Persons; the Father begetting the Son; the Son begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both: which is a Mystery far exceeding our understanding: yet so far are we to know and believe it, as God hath revealed it in his word: and therefore first we are to examine our selves con-

concerning this knowledge.

Concerning man we are to know that he was first created in uprightness, *according to the Image of God*, Gen. 1. 17. but afterwards fell through disobedience, and was again recovered by the meritorious death of Christ Jesus. This we are to examine according to the two parts of the Word of God, the Law, and the Gospel.

In the first we shall plainly see what we are in our selves, even wretched and miserable sinners, corrupt children of disobedience parents, and that we have justly deserved death as a due reward for our manifold sins, both original and actual, being

carnal, ſold under ſin, by nature the Children of wrath, Epheſ. 2. 3.

In the ſecond we ſhall underſtand that we are in Chriſt, and what that Covenant is, which God hath made unto man in him, for the pardoning of their ſins which return unto him by repentance, and apply the ſame unto themſelves by faith. So that here we are to know two things: 1. The means of our redemption and reconciliation, the Death of Chriſt: *whom God in love ſent into the world, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons*, Gal. 4. 5. *and ſo hath delivered us from the power of dark-*

darkneſs, Coloſ. 1. 13.

2. The means, whereby we may apply this unto our ſelves: namely faith, which is a gift of God, begotten and increaſed by hearing the word, and receiving the Sacrament. Let us therefore ſeriouſly examine our ſelves, whether we have learned out of the Word of God our firſt innocency, which we had by Creation; our miſery, which we fell into by tranſgreſſion; and the happineſs, which we have obtained again by our ſweet and bleſſed redemption: for in thoſe things ought every one to be inſtructed, which approacheth unto the Lords Table.

Beſides this Knowledge

of God and man, we are further to have a particular knowledge of the Sacrament it self: where we are to try, whether we do rightly discern the Elements from the Lords Body, and the true use of them: wherein we must consider, that the Bread and Wine (in themselves ordinary) being ordained of Christ, are now become holy, and whereas Christ blessed this Sacrament at the first institution, we are to know that it is a blessed Sacrament: because, whatsoever he blessed, is blessed, and that it will be a means of great blessing unto us, if rightly received; and whereas Christ gave the same after Supper, we must further know, that it was not ordained

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to satisfie our bodily hunger; for, if *any man* thus hunger, St. *Paul* tells him that he must *eat at home*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 34. but it was given for the refreshing of wearied Souls by the commemoration or Christs death for us, and of our communion with him: but of this particular Knowledge of the Sacrament, more in the beginning of the first Chapter. In this, as in the former must diligently try and examine our selves, for, except we know all these thins, we are not to partake at the Lords Table: because without it, whatsoever we do, is but blind devotion.

CHAP. VII.

The Examination of our Repentance.

THus of our Information in matters which we ought to know. As for our Reconciliation, we are to examine our selves in those things which concern either God, or our Neighbours, because we have and do often offend both.

Those which concern God are principally two. 1. Repentance, whereby we testifie our heavy sorrow for offending him, with a desire of amendment. 2. Faith, where-

whereby we take hold on his mercy, for the pardon and forgiveneſs of them.

Firſt, we are to try whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of Repentance. And indeed, if we truly look into our ſelves, and conſider that we muſt one day give an account for every idle word, we ſhall find matter enough for Repentance, if our hearts be not hardned in ſin. Now, that it is neceſſary to examine our ſelves herein, appears from this, becauſe without it we have no ground at all for any comfort in Chriſt Jeſus: for he, which is ſtuft with his ſins, is no more fit to receive Chriſt, than a glutted

stomack its meat: and again, *unto them that are defiled, there is nothing pure.* Tit. 1. 15. that is, if through unbelief, they remain in their pollutions; but *unto the pure all things are pure*; and *if we cleanse our hands and purifie our hearts, and so draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto us.* Jam. 4. 8. *as many as walk according this rule, peace be upon them.* Gal. 6. 16. Let us then *search and try our waies, and turn unto the Lord.* Lament. 3. 40. and put on *David's* resolution before we come to the Lords Table; *I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thy Alter.* Psal. 26. 6. In this examination of our Repen-

tance

tance we muſt have reſpect both unto the time paſt and to come.

In reſpect of the time paſt we are to perform three duties.

1. Carefully ſearch our hearts to find out our own corruptions; that knowing them, we may the better avoid them, which is moſt neceſſary to be done, and that in the firſt place; becauſe it is impoſſible that he ſhould ſeek to go into the right way, which doth not firſt ſee his errour: and thus much we muſt know, that he that will not ſet his ſins before him here, to his converſion; ſhall have them ſet before him hereafter, to his confuſi-

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on, if we will needs cover and hide ſins, let us in love and charity cover the ſins of others, for *love covereth a multitude of ſin*, 1. Pet. 4. 8. that is, layeth them not open before men to their diſgrace, who have committed them: as many do, who delight to hear other mens faults ript up to the quick, but cannot endure to hear of their own: we ſhould not ſo much exclaim againſt other mens ſins, but rather be humbled for our own, and lay them fully open before our ſelves, that ſo we may come to a more ſerious repentance for them. Which I think, we cannot but do (except we have more than ſtony hearts) when

when we consider the torments which Christ suffered for our sins; and see our own misery, that we are in our selves: for this must needs drive us unto God, as a desparate disease unto the Phisitian; and make us utterly to accuse our selves and say, *Psal.* 51. 3. *I acknowledge my faul and my sin is ever before me.*

Now the chiefest means, which we can use to come to the knowledge of our sins, are these two. 1. A continual meditation in the Word of God, wherein (as in a glass) we shall plainly see all our deformities. 2. A seasonable conference and conversation with such as are

themſelves touched with their ſins, both which are excellent means: and therefore we ought ſincerely to love the Word of God, becauſe it doth diſcover our ſins unto us; and diligently read, and exerciſe our ſelves in it, that ſo we may come to a full knowledge of it; and alſo heartily affect and love thoſe whom we ſee to be thus affected. When we have thus conſidered, that we ought, and how we may diſcover our ſins, let us examine our ſelves whether we have thus done in our life paſt or no, giving thanks to GOD that he hath at any time diſcovered ſuch or ſuch ſins unto us: if we find that we

have

have not thus done (as God knows, we are all to ſlack herein) let us ſeaſonably repent us of this neglect; and be ſorry that we have no ſooner repented; deſiring God, that he will be pleaſed ever more and more to diſcover our ſins unto us, that ſo we may the better forſake them, and ſerve him, as we ought. Having thus unfolded our ſins before our eyes, let us in the ſecond place examine, how in ſorrow, we have humbled our ſelves to God for them; for this is that, even our ſorrow, which muſt move God to compaſſion; and we know that God *is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will ſave*

ſuch

such as be of an humble spirit. Psal. 34. 18. And therefore *David* being pressed down with the burden of his sins, comforted himself in this saying: *The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.* Psal. 51. 17. Whereas on the contrary, if we have no true sorrow, if our souls be not wounded within us for our sins, we cannot expect that either we, or our prayers should be accepted of God: or, that we shall with the Sacrament receive any comfort to our souls, if we come not to it with sorrow for our former transgressions.

Now there is a twofold sorrow

ſorrow: 1. Servile, when we are ſorry for our ſins (as ſome ſervants are when they have offended their Maſters) not becauſe we have ſinned againſt ſuch a Maſter, but becauſe we have thereby made our ſeves ſubject to the puniſhment due unto our offence: this is not that ſorrow which God expecteth of us: for it rather driveth us to deſpair, than to any pious meditations. 2. Filial, when (like natural children) we grieve for our ſins, not ſo much in reſpect of the puniſhment due unto us, as that we have ſinned againſt ſo merciful and loving a Father. This is that true ſorrow, with which we ought

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to be affected: which we may obtain two waies. First, by our selves. Secondly, by the help of others also.

By our selves, and so by the consideration especially of two things: First, who it is that we have offended: even God himself, who in tender mercy towards us, gave his only begotten Son to dye for our sins. The consideration of which cannot but work in us a true sorrow, that we should offend so mercyful a God: for what son is there (if he have in him the affection of a son) but would grieve that he should offend a Father, which hath been ever loving and kind unto him?

2. The grievousneſs of our ſins which we have committed; which will plainly appear, if we conſider them either in reſpect of our ſelves, how deadly they wound the Conſcience; or with reference to others, how infectious they have been to them, whom we have often drawn into the ſame faults, which we our ſelves have committed; and ſo have made them guilty of our ſins, and our ſelves of theirs.

The next means to attain this ſorrow, is the help of other men, who are themſelves touched with a feeling in this kind; with whom we ought to accompany our ſelves

selves, and patiently to accept of their admonitions, still accounting them our truest friends, which most faithfully and roundly puts us in mind of our faults. The hypocrite may esteem such as desire thus to express their love, busie-bodies, or the like: but *Davids* wish was, *that the Righteous might smite him friendly, and reprove him*, Ps. 141. 5. and whosoever is a sound-hearted Christian will ever strive to make the best use of such, as he can. Let us therefore examine our selves, whether we have made good use of those means or not: if we have not, we ought to humble our selves before God for this neglect also; earnestly

earnestly beseeching him, that he will work in us true sorrow for our sins past, with a desire of amendment. Whereunto, that we may the better move him, we are in the next place to lay open and confess our sins to God, which is a third thing required in our Repentance. Confession is so necessary, that without it we can expect no pardon at Gods hands, but rather some judgment or other; and therefore *Solomon* saith, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but who so confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*: and Saint John perswadeth us hereunto by the mercies of God, saying, *If we confess our*

sins.

ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs. Joh. 1. 1, 9.

Now in our confeſſion we are to obſerve eſpecially three things. Firſt, what we are to confeſs. Secondly to whom. Thirdly how.

As for the firſt, there is a twofold confeſſion. 1. *Laudis*, or of Thankfulneſs: of which *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 89 1. *With my mouth will I ever be ſhewing thy truth; yea every day will I give thanks to thee and praiſe thy name.* Pſal. 145. 2. Which we are alſo daily to practiſe according to his example: but this is not that confeſſion which is ſo properly meant here in the matter of Repentance

trance. There is therefore another, called *confessio fraudis*, a confession of sin; and this we are to make, if we will truly repent: which ought to be, not of some sinnes only, but of all, as far as we can call them to mind; and especially of those beloved and bosom sins, to which we are most addicted; which that we may the better do, we ought daily to renew the memory of them in our selves; that so we may be the better able faithfully to confess the same, as often as occasion requires.

2. We are to confess our sins, not unto men or Angels, but unto God, who is the supream Judge of all.

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There is indeed a time wherein we may make confession before men, either in publick, before a whole congregation by way of pennance, being by the Church thereunto commanded; or else in private, and that, either, for satisfaction to our neighbour, whom we have wronged; or for consolation, to the Minister, when our consciencies are troubled. But that confession, which is a part of our Repentance for our sins past against God, and wherein we desire full pardon for the same, we are to make to God alone: for he it is, who is offended, and he alone, that can forgive our sins.

3. Our Confession must not

not be of the heart only, but of the mouth also; for God who made both, expecteth to be honoured by both; and as both have been unclean before him; so they ought both also to acknowledge the same, that he may cleanse and purifie both them, and with them the whole man.

Again, our confession must proceed from a two-fold ground. 1. Hatred of sin, because by it we dishonour God. 2. Hope of Mercy, which is that we aime at in our confession; and it must further be qualified with sincerity, with shame and sorrow that we have offended so gracious a God, lest God reject us as hypocritical. Let

us therefore henceforth leave off cenſuring the faults of other men and begin to aggravate our own; and eſpecially before we preſume to come to the Supper of the Lord; Let us take ſome time unto our ſelves wherein we may be moſt private; and ſhut our ſelves up in our Cloſets, and there humbly on our knees lay open before God thoſe ſins, which we have committed in our life paſt: and that fully and faithfully; neither diminiſhing the number of them, nor mincing the haynouſneſs of them, for God will not be mocked. Theſe are things, which we are to perform in reſpect of the time paſt: as for the time

to

to come, we must know, that he which will truly repent, must not only turn from Evil, but also turn unto good; and therefore, having confessed our sins past with sorrow for them, we must (if we expect pardon) constantly purpose for ever after, by Gods grace, to amend and reform our lives; resolving (as much as in us lieth) to avoid all occasion, which may draw us into the like sins again; and to make better use of those means which God hath afforded us, than we have done heretofore; and that by so much the more, by how much we have offended so gracious a Father. But of this resoluti-

on of amendment, more in the 12. Chap.

CHAP. VIII.

The Examination of our Faith.

THe Examination of our Faith, is that whereunto S. *Paul* exhorteth the *Corinthians*, saying, *Examine your selves, whether you be in the faith; or not*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. The necessity whereof appeareth even from this, that *without faith we cannot please God in any thing we do*, Heb. 11. 26. much less in this weighty business; yea Faith is so necessary, that without it we do receive nothing at all, when

when we do receive; for although with our bodily hands we receive the Bread and Wine; yet if we have not Faith, we want a hand to receive the Body and bloud of Christ, and the comfort which thence ariseth unto our souls: for how can we be perswaded in our consciences, that our receving is acceptable unto God, and that the merits of Christ Jesus belong unto us without Faith? It is impossible that we should receive any more comfort than what we believe; and therefore our Saviour Christ saith, *He that believeth on me shall never thirst*, Joh. 6. 35. Therein implying, that he which doth not believe in

him, ſhall ever thirſt: yea, which is fearful, *he which believeth not, ſhall be damned, Mark* 16. 16.

Now that Faith which is here required of us, muſt not be only a general faith, whereby we believe that the Word of God is true, and that God is a juſt Judge; (for this the Devils themſelves believe, and tremble at it; and well they may, conſidering what is due to them, eternal condemnation) but we muſt go on further to a more ſpecial kind of Faith, and (which they cannot do) apply the merits of Chriſt, and the promiſes of God made therein unto our Souls and Conſciences; ſaying with *Job*, *chap.*

chap. 19. verſ. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth: I know by the knowledge of Faith; or I believe; and not only the Redeemer of Man, but My Redeemer liveth.

Of which that we may the more fully perſwade our ſelves, we muſt believe; firſt, concerning our ſelves, that we are not able of our ſelves to do any thing that is acceptable and pleaſing in the ſight of God; *For we have nothing but what we have received of God*, as S. *Paul* teſtifieth, whether good gift, or ability of doing good.

2. Concerning the means of our Salvation, we muſt believe, that the merits of Chriſts death and Paſſion,

are alone sufficient for our Redemption, without any merits at all, or satisfaction of ours.

3. Concerning God, we ought to believe; that if we truly repent us of our life past, constantly purposing to lead a new life hereafter, and sincerely use those good means, which he shall afford us, he will then be merciful unto us in accepting our indeavours, through the merits of Christ Jesus.

4. Concerning the Sacrament, we ought to believe; that it is a means, ordained of God, to exhibite unto us Christ Jesus with his merits, and a seal to confirm our Faith. If, upon consideration

one of these particulars, we can be thus perswaded of our own insufficiency and unworthiness, and that yet notwithstanding upon our sincere humiliation, and obedience, God will be merciful unto us; if we cannot only say in general that God is a merciful Father, and that Christ died for the redemption of Man; but every one of us in particular thus apply unto himself: I believe that God is my merciful Father, and Christ Jesus died to redeem me as well as any other, all which I shall have plainly confirmed unto me in the receiving of this Sacrament, wherein, (I trust) God will in mercy accept me

for Christs merits, though to my self I be unworthy: if (I say) we can find that we are not hypocritically, but sincerely, not verbally, but heartily, thus perswaded; then may we, having thus made peace with God by our Faith and Repentance, boldly approach unto the Lords Table.

CHAP. IX.

The Examination of our Charity.

HAving Examined our selves in those former duties towards God, we are to goe on to another duty, which concerneth our neighbour:

bour: namely, charity: which is a free forgiving of those that have offended us, with a testification of the same, when occasion is offered: and reconciliation of our selves to those, whom we also our selves have wronged.

That we may be the better perswaded unto a due performance of this duty; we are to observe two things.

1. The Motives hereunto.

2. The manner how it ought to be done.

The Motives, which invite us to the necessity of it, are drawn from the consideration of these four things.

1. What we our selves have done unto others.

2. What

2. What harm we do unto our ſelves by not being in Charity.

3. What they are, with whom we are offended.

4. Whence ſuch wrongs, as we receive, do primarily come.

As for the First, we are conſcious unto our ſelves of a twofold offence, which we have committed.

1. Againſt other men, whom perhaps we have at ſome time or other more wronged, than they us, or at leaſt our conſciences can tell us, that we have been prone and ready thereunto, had we not been prevented: and how can he, which hath been forward to wrong others,

others, make the most of every wrong offered by others unto himself? We must here take notice of the advise of *Solomon* in another case. *Seek not*, saith he, *to have thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes thy heart knoweth, that thou thy self hast also cursed others*, Eccles. 7. 22. So also be not hasty to aggravate the wrong which others have done unto thee; for thy heart can tell thee, that thou thy self hast also wronged others.

2. If this consideration prevail not with us; let us consider in the next place, that we have daily offended God far more than any man can offend us: and can

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any of us expect any mercy from God in the forgiveness of our debts, if we shew none to others in passing by small matters of offence? Small, I say, because the greatest are small in respect of the offences which we have committed against God. Our Saviour Christ told his Disciples, plainly (and in them us,) *Mark* 11. 25. *If ye do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses*: which was verified in the Parable of the cruel servant; who (because he had no compassion on his fellow-servant, as his Lord had pitty on him) was *delivered to the tormentors, till he should pay all that*

was

was due; with this application annexed, *so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their trespasses*, Mat. 18.34,35. The consideration whereof, I think, is able to move any good-hearted Christian to love his Brethren, though they have offended him.

The second motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the harm, that otherwise we bring upon our own souls; which indeed is greater, than either we can do unto others, or they unto us.

This harm is twofold; 1. General; namely, a claim to all the good which we have

have: for *though we spake with the tongue of Men and Angels*: though we have all other good gifts, as of *Prophesying, understanding of mysteries*, &c. *yet, if we have not Charity, we are nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Let us not therefore boast of our learning and other good parts, as long as we are without Charity; for all is nothing, *no more than a sounding brass, or a tinkling Cymbal.*

2. Particular: and so it is an hinderance, 1. To our Prayers, 2. To the right receiving of the Sacrament. The want of Charity is an hinderance to our Prayers in a twofold respect.

1. Because, without Charity,

rity, we cannot expect to receive that which we pray for; for if we pray to God to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, how shall we hope that God will forgive us, if we forgive not others, which is the condition of our Prayers? To pray for the one, and not to perform the other, is to mock God in our Prayers; or rather, miserably to deceive our selves: for as many have not because they ask not, *so many work and receive not, because they ask amisse: Jam.* 4. 3. and such are they which ask without Charity: and who knows how soon they may stand in need of Gods mercy?

2. It hinders our Prayers in this respect; because without Charity, we cannot joyn those, with whom we are at variance, with our selves in our Prayers: which is against the rule of our Saviour Christ, who biddeth us to pray, *Our Father*, and *give us our Bread*; and so joyn others with our selves in every Petition: now how can we heartily pray thus for them, whom we love not? Our own Consciences can sufficiently tell us, that we cannot; yea, and that we often have been faulty herein. Wherefore, if we desire that our prayers should henceforth be effectual, let us follow the Councel, which S.

Peter

Peter giveth to the Husband and Wife, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. Which is, *to live together according to knowledge, bearing one with another, that our prayers be not hindered*: which if we do, our Prayers ſhall be much furthered, as Chriſt himſelf ſaith: *If two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching the thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven, Mat.* 18. 19.

The want of Charity is an hinderance to our due receiving of the Sacrament: becauſe the Sacrament is a Seal of our union and communion, as with Chriſt, ſo amongſt our ſelves; as Saint *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. 17.

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The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many are one Bread and one Body, because we partake of one Bread. So that, unless we be joyned together in love, we cannot be capable of those benefits, which otherwise would arise unto our souls.

Again, Love is the very badge whereby we are known to be Christs Disciples, *John* 13. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* It is a part of that wedding-garment, wherewith every one ought to be cloathed, that

that comes to the Lords Table. Wherefore, if we desire to be accepted when we do come, and there to receive the benefits of Christs Death and Passion, let us put on the bowels of mercy and compassion.

A Third Motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the parties; with whom we are offended: they are Men, yea Christians as well as our selves; such for whom Christ died as well as for us. Shall we then think it hard to suffer some small wrong at their hands, for whom Christ thought it not too much to die? Can we perswade our selves, that there is the love of God in us, if

we

we hate them whom he so loved? *every one, which loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* 1 Joh. 5. 1. and whosoever loveth him that did redeem, loveth him also that is redeemed by him.

The Fourth Motive unto this duty of Charity is taken from a serious consideration of the first original, whence these wrongs proceed, which we receive.

And here we may take notice both of the Authour, and also of the Disposer thereof. The first Authour is not so much the party from whom we receive the wrong, as the grand-enemy of both us and them, the Devil, who well know-

knoweth, that *a house divided against it self cannot stand*: and therefore striveth by all means to set us at variance amongst our selves, though sometimes upon small occasions; that so thereby hindering us from the performance of good durie, (as the receiving of the Sacrament, and such like) which are the means of our Salvation, he may the more easily tempt us to worse imployment, while others are better exercised; and so make his side the stronger against us: and who knows what power it may please God to give him against us at such times? Wherfore, as we love our own safety, let us seek to

cross

croſs him, who thus oppoſeth us by his temptations: and if we will needs be at ſtrife, let it be with him, who will never be at quiet with us, until he have gotten the upper hand of us: which we may the more eaſily perſwade our ſelves unto; if we have reſpect not ſo much to other mens wrongful actions, as to his wicked ſuggeſtions, the cauſe of all, and aſſure our ſelves, that, in putting up a wrong, we right our ſelves, and croſs him; which ſhould be our chiefeſt aime.

Again, as the Devil is the Authour of our wrongs: ſo God, who is the Diſpoſer of all things, hath a hand in

it:

it: who permitted the Devil thus far to provoke us: perhaps for the tryal of our constancy and patience, or for some other ends best known unto himself: and, if we could but see, that the finger of God is in our Crosses, we would patiently answer with *David*, Psalm 39. 10. *I will become dumb, and open not my mouth because it is thy doing; and so commit our cause to him that he might make our righteousnesse clear*, Psal. 36. 7.

These are the cheifest Motives to perswade us to this duty of Love and Charity; to all which we may adde another, taken from the exceeding love of God to us, *who*

so loved us, without any love received first from us, *that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sinnes*, 1 John 4. 10. Whence the Apostle gathereth this powerfull consequence: *If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, verse 12. Which that we may the better do, let us in the next place see the manner how it ought to be performed.

Here we are to have respect both to the time past, and also to come.

As for the time past, either we have wronged others, or they us. If we have wronged others, we ought to perform two things.

1. Undoe that which we have

have done, by making reſtitution as far as in us lies: according to the example of *Zacheus*, Luke 19. 8. who was willing to *reſtore fourfold whatſoever he had taken from any man by falſe accuſation*: ſuch ought we to be, ready to make good whatſoever we have taken from any man, and to give ſatisfaction for any wrong that we have done. Neither is it ſufficient to be willing thus to make ſatisfaction, when we are moved thereunto; but we muſt alſo in the ſecond place, ſeek peace with thoſe whom we have wronged, though we be not asked: which is the counſel of Chriſt himſelf. Mat. 5. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there*

remember'ſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leave thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother: he ſaith not ſtay till he come to thee; to be reconciled when he cometh, but go thou to him. And ſo *David* alſo adviſeth us, *Pſalm* 34. 14. *Seek peace and enſue it*; ſtay not till it be offered to, or required of thee; but ſeek it. But perhaps thoſe (whom we have offended) are far off, and we cannot come neer them; or near, and will not be reconciled to us, what ſhall we do in this caſe? Here we ought to uſe all means that we can, for the procuring of peace and quietneſs: but if either

either occaſion or acceptance be denyed us, we muſt not doubt but that God will be pleaſed to accept of our deſire.

Now, if others have wronged us, we muſt (though perhaps it may ſeem ſomewhat hard) freely forgive them; loving even them that hate us, whereunto our Saviour Chriſt admoniſhed us in every Goſpel, ſaying, *If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeaven times a day, thou ſhalt forgive him*, Luke 17. 4. And again, *I ſay unto you, love your enemies; bleſs them that curſe you*, Mat. 5. 44. But ſome one may ſay, ſuch an one hath wronged me ſo much, that fleſh and blood cannot take it.

it. It is true, if thou consule with flesh and blood, it will seem hard to bear the least wrong: but flesh is not a friend, whom we may safely consult, but rather a bosom enemy, whom we ought to resist: if we ask counsell of CHRIST (whose counsell we ought, and may most safely follow) he will bid us go and be reconciled, and Saint *Paul* bids us *to feed our enimies, and to overcome evil with good*, Rom. 12. 12. & *Solomon* can tell us, that it *is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression*, Prov. 19. 11. As for revenge, it is not for us to meddle with it; because the Lord himself saith, *Deut.* 32. 35. *To me belongeth vengeance*

geance and recompence: and St. *James* will assure us, that to *have bitter envyings, and strife in the heart, is wisdom which descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish: but that wisdom which is from above, is easie to be entreated, and full of mercy*, James 3. 17. Wherefore let us grieve at such wrathfull motions, assuring our selves that it is a point of heavenly wisdom to forbear; and certainly if we can but once find that God hath wrought in us a readiness to forgive those which have wronged us, and to pray for their conversion, we may esteem it an evident sign of Sanctification.

As for the time to come,

that we may the better preſerve the bond of Charity, we muſt reſolve carefully to obſerve theſe two ſorts of Rules. 1. How we may keep peace with others. 2. How others may do the like with us.

As for the firſt, becauſe others may outwardly wrong us either in word or deed, that we may in both avoid diſcontent and ſtrife thereupon, we muſt propoſe unto our ſelves a twofold Rule.

1. Concerning their words; which is the Rule in *Solomon*, Prov. 7. 21. namely, *That we take no heed to all words that are ſpoken:* for this is that, which often ſtirreth up ſtrife amongſt us, which otherwiſe might

might easily, and without any prejudice be avoided, if men were not too inquisitive and ready to take notice of every thing that is spoken: and therefore we should here not entertain, but sleight, yea reiect such men, who under pretence of love unto us, will whisper in our ears, and maliciously informe us, against such or such an one, whom *Solomon* calleth *pick-thanks, whisperers, tale-bearers, such as will separate chief friends.* Prov. 16. 28. for occasion of separation may bee given (if so taken) between friends; as we often see that hee, which is singularly affected to another, may hastily speak some reproachful

words of him; which perhaps he will presently be sorry for, and not speak the like again; yet this shall be enough for the breach of charity, if it be in the audience of a whisperer: who (to speak the truth) is a meer incendiary, that will ever be adding fuell to the fire of contention. Whence Saint *James* calls the tongue, *a fire, a world of iniquitie, that setteth on fire the whole course of Nature*, James 3. 6. And *Solomon* saith, that *without wood the fire is quenched; and without a tale-bearer, strife ceaseth*, Prov. 26. 20.

The second rule, whereby we may keep peace with others, is concerning other

ments actions: which is that we so take them (though sometimes wrongful) that we be not easily provoked thereby, for an hasty and furious discontent upon some small occasion, doth often break out to the breach of Charity; whereas a seasonable deliberation would mitigate the matter, and so cover all in silence. And therefore Saint Paul teacheth us, that *Charitie suffereth long, and is not easily provoked.* 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. If we can but make true use of these two Rules, we may easily, for our parts, live at peace with others. Secondly, we must endeavour that others also by our carriage may do the like with us: to

which

which purpose we must take away, first, a common fault amongst us, which is a main cause of strife and enmity. 2. the occasion thereof.

The fault it self is railing, scandalous and reproachful speaking: which is so frequent, that few or none (if we look narrowly into our words) but are conscious unto themselues hereof; but also heinous in it self, that Saint *Paul* ranketh it with robbery and extortion, 1. *Cor.* 6. 10. saying that *neither theives, nor reuilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdome of God*; and so pernicious also unto the sweet society of men; that it is that breath, which often blows the coals of contention

tention so far, that they cannot be quenched again without blood: and daily experience teacheth us, that there is no such common cause of strife and debate, as scandalous terms which are so often heard amongst us; so that, if we can but avoid these, we shall take away the very ground, upon which our wrongful actions are builded; and therefore Saint *James*, *beseeching us* by the name of *Brethren*, exhorteth us *not to speak evil one of another*, Jam. 4. 11. and Saint *Peter's* advice is, that *we lay aside all evil speaking, and as new born babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word.* 1. Pet. 2. 1.

Now, that our speech of

others

others may be such as it ought to be, let us follow the advice of *Solomon*, whose counsel is that *it be friendly*: Prov. 18.24. *A man that hath friends ought to shew himself friendly*: not uttering any thing that may tend to their disgrace; lest by such discourtesies, he lose their good liking, but rather endeavour by fair, and courteous speeches, to knit their hearts faster unto him.

Neither yet can we easily avoid this fault, unless in the second place we take away the occasion of it; which is a tickling desire, that most men are affected with, to hear the faults of other men (though perhaps lesse than their own) laid

laid open and ſpoken againſt; which quickly begetteth a ſuſpition of their worth, and hereupon we too too readily build ſome calumnious report or other. If it ſhall therefore happen at any time, that we hear the ſlips and errours of another, let us not be delighted therein, but rather ſeek to cover them; for *he that covereth a fault ſeeketh love*, Prov. 17. 9. and not he which deſireth to have them laid open. This is that which we ought to do, both for the reſtoring and preſerving of Charity; wherein we muſt neceſſarily examine our ſelves before we come to partake with others at the Lords Table. If upon examination

we find any thing wanting, either that we are not in charity with others, or others with us; let us according to these rules seek by all means to make good what is wanting, and so come.

CHAP. X.

Of Premeditation and Prayer.

THus of the first thing to be perform'd in our preparation, namely Examination of our own fitness to receive. The second is the Premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive: which we must not omit, that we may the better be stirred up

up to ſeek God, and to communicate at his Table with joy and gladneſs; for there is nothing which makes us more cold and backward in ſuch duties, than this, that we have not ſufficiently taſted how good the Lord is to thoſe that ſeek him; the conſideration whereof is alone able to move any man to a longing deſire after him. Wherefore, having ſearched into our own eſtate by a ſecond examination, leſt we ſhould yet fall back to a lukewarm careleſneſs of what we are to do, (to which the Devil will be ever ready to tempt us) and ſo become the more unfit to communicate at the Lords Table, either to

Gods

Gods glory or our own comfort, let us ever quicken our devotion with a seasonable premeditation before we come, of the benefits which we are to receive by coming. All which are comprehended in this one word Life, which we receive in the Lords Supper, by receiving Christ, who is *Life it self*, *Joh.* 14. 6.

Now the life of a Christian is either the life of Grace here, or of Glory hereafter.

The life of Grace (which we obtain in this Supper) consists of two things.

1. A happy freedom from a twofold evil; first, of sinne; from which we are freed by the death of Christ: whose bloud

bloud (if we rely on him) will make our ſins (though as red as Scarlet) to become as white as wool.

2. Of puniſhment; from which Chriſt hath redeemed us by the ſhedding of his bloud; ſo that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. where we may boldly ſay, *who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died: yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us*, verſ. 34.

The Second thing is a comfortable enjoyment of a threefold good.

1. An inſeparable union both with Chriſt our head, *from whom nothing ſhall be able*

to

to ſeparate us, Rom. 8. 38. as alſo with our brethren and fellow-members in Love and Charity; which *David* accounted *A good and pleaſant thing*, Pſal. 133. 1.

2. A bleſſed ſtrengthning of our faith, whereof this Sacrament is a ſure ſeal (as before) whence it ſhall come to paſs, that we ſhall be able to reſiſt the temptations of the Devil, (who ſtriveth by all means to make ſhipwrack of our faith and us) and reply with *David*, Pſ. 16. 9. *I have ſet God alwaies before me, for he is on my right hand, therefore ſhall I not fall*: this is that which *will make our hearts glad, and our fleſh to reſt in hope*: as it is *verſ* 10. which bring-

bringeth in a third good, and that not the least, that God vouchsafeth to his people in this world, namely, Peace of conscience.

This is that which we are most carefully to seek after, and which in the latter end, will be more ~~wrath~~ worth unto us, than ten thousand world of pleasure which we can enjoy: and therefore *David*'s counsel is, *Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last*, Psal. 37. 37. Now wherein can we better keep innocency, than by being carefully and faithfully exercised in Gods service? And what greater comfort of heart, and what greater

Custodi innocentiam, & vide aequitatem: quoniam sunt reliquiae homini pacifico.

ter peace of conſcience can rebound to a poor ſinful ſoul, than the full aſſurance of the forgiveneſs of his ſins, and his inſeparable union with Chriſt Jeſus? which we receive, if we receive aright, by receiving this Sacrament. This is that, beſides which there is nothing in us which ſhall be able to ſtrengthen and comfort us againſt our Enemy the Devil, in the day of our departure hence; who will then be ſure to affright us with the uglineſs of our ſins (though now in policy he cover them) that ſo he may, if it be poſſible, drive us to deſpair of Gods mercy towards us: then (I ſay) by the help of a

good

good conſcience, as *Samuel* reſolutely ſpeake unto the Iſraelites, 1 *Sam.* 21. 3. ſaying *Behold, here I am; witneſs againſt me before the Lord, and before his annointed; whoſe Ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded? and I will reſtore it you*: ſo ſhall we be able to non-plus our calumniating enemy, and ſay, Behold, Satan, here I am, witneſs againſt me before the Lord: wherein have I done thoſe evil things which I ſhould not have done? wherein have I omitted thoſe good duties which I ſhould have done? when did I at any time deſpair of Gods mercy, or neglect the ſame? when did I prophane, or abuſe his holy

Sabbaths? When did I contemn or neglect his word and Sacrament? here I am; witneſs againſt me: but my conſcience tells me to my comfort, that I have diligently, according to my power, performed what I ought, and therefore thou haſt no part in me. If we can thus clear our ſelves, then ſhall we be able to ſay with S. *Paul*, 2. Tim. 4. 7. 8. *The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*: and that which followeth hereupon, is, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.* This Crown is that beneſit, which we ſhall receive, after this life of grace is ended, in the life of

Certamen illud præclarum decertavi cursum peregi fidem servavi

Q. d. reliquum est, reposita est mihi Justitiæ coronam reddat mihi Dominus ille Judex Justus ille Judex: non solum autem mihi sed & omnibus qui desiderant illustrem illum ejus adventum.

of glory, In the mean time, while we live here, we shall receive, though not this Crown actually, yet the full assurance thereof, believing with S. *Paul*, *that it is laid up for us, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us at the last day.*

These are the benefits, which every true Communicant receiveth at the Lords Table: wherefore (as we desire to receive these benefits, which passe all understanding) let us carefully meditate thereon, that we may be inflamed with the desire of them.

But because all that wee can do, is nothing without Gods blessing, we are in the

next place to pray to God, that he will be pleaſed to bleſs our endeavours, and to accept us in his Son, which is the third duty required of us in our Preparation: without the due performance of which, though otherwiſe we have diligently prepared our ſelves, we cannot expect to receive any comfort of ſoul, with the Bread and Wine, becauſe God only giveth that unto us, and he is debter unto no man: let us therefore ſeek unto him by prayer for a bleſſing, who is the giver of all bleſſings. This we ought to do firſt in private, ſetting aſide ſome convenient times, wherein we may freely betake our ſelves to this duty:

but

but especially in the morning, when we are to receive, we should rise early and consider what we are to do that day, namely, sit at the Lords Table, and therefore be sure that we consecrate our selves to God by prayer and good meditations. Secondly in publick, with the Congregation, where we ought to present our selves at the very beginning, that so we may joyn together in all things which we are to perform, and there at our first entrance pour forth unto God (as at all other times) this, or the like Prayer.

O Lord strengthen me against the temptations of Satan, who strives to draw away my heart

from thee; and accept the prayers which I shall now make unto thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Which done, Joyn with the Congregation in such prayers as are then used.

In both we are carefully to consider two things.

1. For whom we ought to pray; and that is, not for our selves only, but others also, according to the Counsel of S. *James, chap.* 5. *v.* 16. *Pray one for another*, which we learn from the pattern of prayer; the Lords prayer, left unto us by Christ himself.

Confitemini alij alijs offensas [pretamini alij pro alijs] ut sanemini; multum enim valet ex deprecatio justi efficax

2. How we ought to pray; and that is, first in humilley, with a feeling of our own wants, for which the poor Pub-

Publican was *rather justified* than the proud Pharisee for his vain boasting, *Luke* 18. 14. Secondly, in a setled and fervent devotion: when we pray, our minds ought not to be fixed on any thing else, (as many, God knows, are) for God will have the whole heart, or none. 3. In Faith; with confidence that we shall receive what we ask; for *he which wavereth*, that is, not believeth, *Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord*, *James* 1. 7. If we be deficient in any one of these conditions, we ask amiss, and so shall receive accordingly. Wherefore, as we desire to receive benefit, and comfort

Non enim existimet homo ille quicquam accipiendum a Deo.

by the Lords Supper, Let us seek unto God for it: and as we hope to have our prayers heard, let us pray both for our selves and others in true humility, fervency, and devotion, and assured hope of obtaining.

Chap. XI.

Of Meditation at the Lords Table.

HAving thus fitted our selves by examination of our estate, premeditation of the benefits, and prayer for a blessing, we may assure our selves that we have prepared our selves for the receiving of the Holy Communion, (though

(though by reason of our weakneſs, not in that meaſure) yet in that right manner as we ought: and ſo have performed the firſt duty required of us, namely, diligent preparation; wherenpon we may boldly and cheerfully (otherwiſe not) preſent our ſelves unto the Lords Table: where we are to be exerciſed in a ſecond duty, namely, a ſeaſonable Meditation.

This Meditation muſt be threefold. 1. Before. 2. In the time of the Conſecration. 3. After the ſame, or, in the time of Receiving.

Before the Conſecration, when the Miniſter is going towards the Table, Meditate

on these two things. 1. Seing the Table spread, and the Elements set thereon, we are to consider, what place we are come unto; namely, the Table of the great King of Heaven and Earth: and that therefore we ought most carefully and reverently, to behave our selves, both in body, by a reverent and seemly gesture: and also in mind, laying aside all earthly cogitations whatsoever, and that in a twofold respect, 1. Because the place it self is holy, and therefore ought not to be profaned by any unseemly behaviour, for these must be laid aside, as God commanded, *Exod.* 3.5. *Put off thy Shoots from off thy feet,*

feet, for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 2. Becauſe as the place is holy, ſo alſo God himſelf is there amongſt us, as he ſaith, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* He is in the midſt of us, beholding not only our outward geſture, but our very hearts and affections; and ready both to reward thoſe that honour him by reverencing, and to puniſh all ſuch as diſhonour him by profaning and abuſing his holy ordinance; which we ſhall do if our carriage be not with fear and reverence.

Ubi enim duo aut ſunt duo vel tres coacti in nomine eo illic ſum in medio eorum.

2. When we hear the Miniſter ſay *draw near and take*

rake this Sacrament, we must consider that God by his Minister freely inviteth us to his Table: then let every one lift up his heart by this or the like ejaculation.

Dñe non dignus dignus propter peccata mea

Lord I am not worthy, by reason of my sins, to approach before thee; but seeing it hath pleased thee in mercy to call me, behold, in humility and obedience I come.

Then joyn in prayer with the Minister. In the time of the Consecration we ought seriously to settle our minds on the Elements, and the Actions about them, for the better stirring up of our devotion: and so meditate thus 1. When we hear the Minister read the Words of Christs

In-

Inſtitution, and ſee him take the Bread and Wine, we ought joyfully and thankfully to meditate on the great love of God, in ſetting apart his Son for the redemption of us his enemies, in the taking of theſe Elements, and ſetting them apart to be diſtributed unto us, as ſeals and pledges of the ſame: joyfully (I ſay) in reſpect of the benefit, which doth thereby come unto us, and thankfully in reſpect of God's love, which is greater than all the hearts of men joyn'd in one are able to expreſs.

3. When we ſee the Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, we ought to be exerciſed in a twofold Meditation.

1. Of

1. Of comfort; considering that the Bread is broken, and the Wine is poured out, not only to be the more visible to the Communicants, but chiefly to represent unto us the crucifiing of Christs Body, and the shedding of his Blood for our sins: for *he was broken for our iniquities*, Is. 53. 5. By which is not meant that any bone of him was broken, but that he was crucified: whence we should every one of us gather this comfort, saying to our souls: *Christ Jesus was broken on the Cross, and suffered an accursed death for me, by whose merits, I trust, I shall escape the curse of that death, which is due for my sins unto me.* And here by the

way

way we may take notice how the Papists do erre in delivering whole Cakes unto the Communicants, which represents Christ whole, not crucified, and so affords the less comfort.

2. Of Sorrow, and that for our sins; the grievousness of which was such that they could not be satisfied for, without the pretious bloud of *Christ Jesus*: these were the spears that pierced him to the Soul; that was that which drew his pretious bloud from his side: and the consideration of this should breed in us a hearty sorrow, that we, so vile wretches as we are, should thus wound so loving a Redeemer: & certainly if we do

not grieve for those sins, for which he hath so much smarted, we may justly fear that the stupid Earth, the hard Rock, and the dark Graves, which trembled, rent, and opened at his death, shall one day rise up in judgment against us and condemn us. When therefore we see the Bread broken, *&c.* let every one thus meditate: *O vile reath that I am, that I by my sin, should thus wound my merciful and loving Redeemer!*

After the Consecration, when the Minister is receiving himself (considering that we are in the presence of God, who seeth our very hearts) we should pour out our souls unto him in this or the like soliloquie.

O

O sweet Jesu, I do humbly acknowledge with the Centurian that I am not worthy, that thou shouldest enter under my roof, much less to come and sup and dwell with me: but seeing it is thy good pleasure to vouchsafe me this favour, cleanse me I beseech thee from my sins, that I may entertain thee in a pure and sanctified heart, strengthen my faith that I may fully relie on thy merit, comfort me with thy blessed Spirit and so dwell with me for ever. Grant this O blessed Redeemer, for thy mercies sake, Amen.

Again, before we receive when the Minister is coming to distribute, and offers the Elements unto us (considering that Christ with all his

his benefits is offered unto us by God, as well as the Elements by the Minister) let every one meditate thus with himself: *Christ with the benefits of his death doth now come to sanctifie and comfort my sinful soul, in full assurance whereof I am to receive these signs and seals at the hand of his Minister*: And so as he stretcheth out his hand to receive these, let him lift up his soul in Faith with this or the like ejaculation. *Come Lord Jesus unto thy humble servant, as my trust is thou wilt.* This we are to do after the Consecration, before we receive.

After this in the act of receiving we are to perform these two things.

1. While

1. While we eat the Bread meditate every one thus.

Bleſſed Jeſu, I do heartily believe that thou waſt crucified on the Croſſe and that for me as well as for any other, and, as I now have received this Bread broken, whereby my body ſhall be nouriſhed: ſo I believe that I have alſo received ſpiritualy thy body crucified with all the beneſits thereof, the full pardon of all my ſins; and the ſtrengthning and refreſhing of my ſinful ſoul: this I believe, Lord help my unbelief for thy mercies ſake. Aman.

2. When we drink the Wine, and while we feel it in our ſtomack, we ſhould thus meditate.

Moſt bleſſed Redeemer, I do truly

truly believe that thy Bloud was ſhed out of thy Body as verily as I have received this Wine apart from the Bread, and that for the remiſſion of my ſins, as well as any others: and I do alſo believe that with this Wine I have received thy precious Bloud, whereby my ſins are fully waſhed away and my ſoul purified: and that according to thy promiſe, I ſhall never hunger nor thirſt any more, becauſe with this Bread and Wine I have received thy fleſh, which is meat indeed, and thy Bloud, which is drink indeed; with which I humbly pray thee to cherriſh and nouriſh my poor ſoul, and to increaſe in me hearty love to theſe my fellow members, who have now participated with me, that ſo

we

we may serve thee as we ought, and that nothing may be able to seperate us from thy love, which I humbly beseech thee to grant for thy mercies sake; Amen.

CHAP. XII.

Of Practice.

THis is that, whereon we ought to meditate in the time of receiving; which being duly performed, we ought in the next place to take notice of a religious Practice of those things, which are to be observed afterwards in our life and conversation.

These things may be reduced to two heads: namely, such

ſuch as we are to do. 1. In the Church. 2. At home.

In the Church we muſt perform two duties.

1. Having ended the former meditations, we ought each man in particular to give thanks unto God for his mercy, in this or the like form.

O Lord, I humbly bleſs thy Holy Name, for that thou in mercy vouchſafed to accept me at this thy Table amongſt the reſt of thy elect and choſen people, and that thou haſt ſo graciouſly fed my languiſhing ſoul with the precious body and blood of Chriſt Jeſus. I confeſs, O Lord, that I am not worthy of the leaſt of thy favours: but ſeeing it hath pleaſed thee thus to

have

have mercy upon me; give me grace, I humbly beseech thee, to walk worthy of this thy mercy in newness of life, to the glorie of thy holy name, and the salvation of my sinful soul; even for thy mercies sake. Amen.

2. After this, every one ought to joyn with the Congregation in prayer & thanksgiving, praising God for his goodness, and so depart lovingly together with chearful hearts, that God hath so graciously entertained us his unworthy servants.

After we are come home, we are further to take notice of two duties.

1. Meditation, meditating seriously what comfort we have received by being at the

the Lords Table. Upon which consideration, if we find any good motions in our selves; any assurance of the forgiwneſs of our sins, we ought by all means to cherriſh the same; by the comfortable remembrance of Christs death and passion for us; and so much the more lift up our thankful hearts unto God for his mercy; as S. *Paul* sweetly exhorteth the *Coloſſians* saying, *as I have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, abounding therein with thankſgiving*, Col. 2. 6, 7. And this is that which *Solomon* maketh a true note of a righteous man, that he will

ever

ever be increasing those good gifts, which he hath in him: when he saith, *Prov.* 4. 18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto perfect day.* When therefore we shall find a little faith, a little love in us (as God knows the best of us hath little enough) let us desire to increase it, and to have our corruptions diminished: for these desires are a beginning of Grace, and a sign of a heart well affected: and of this desire we cannot make a better tryal, than by considering whether we long to receive again the next time, that so these good beginnings may be the more perfected.

But

But if we find not this comfort in us: let us search into our selves, whether there be not some sin in us as yet unrepented of, and whether we came not so well prepared to the Communion as we should, if so, then ought we to humble our selves before God, with sorrow for this our negligence: If we cannot see this in us, but that we came well prepared: then must we patiently wait the Lords leisure, and pray earnestly that he will give us the comfort of his spirit, with full assurance that he will grant our requests when it shall be best for us.

The Second duty, wherein we must be exercised at

home, is a resolution or constant purpose of leading a new life, whereunto St. *Paul* earnestly inviteth us, *Rom.* 6. 19. saying, *As you have yeilded your members servants to uncleanness, and unto iniquity, even so now yeild your members servants to Righteousness unto holiness*: and why? *because being made free from sin, and become servants unto God we have our fruit* (not unto sinne, but) *unto godliness*, v. 22. shall we then be made free from sin, and become the servants of GOD, and yet return unto sinne again? GOD forbid: if we do so, *we receive the grace of God in vain*: which Saint *Paul* beseecheth the Corinthians to

take heed of, 2. *Cor.* 6. 1. now what is it but to receive the Grace of God in vain, when after we have *escaped the pollutions of this world through the knowledg of our Lord and Savious Jesus Christ, we are again intangled therewith*; and as the Sow to the mire, return to our former course of life again? S. *Peter* will assure us, that *it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it to turn from the holy commandement delivered unto us*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. And well were it, if this were duly considered of some, who think it sufficient to live precisely that day, in which they receive (though perhaps they

can

can ſcarce do that) and preſently afterwards live as prophanely and looſely as ever they did; but we muſt know that God expects a daily reformation of thoſe, which preſent themſelves at his Table; and, if we do not duly conſider of it, we ſhall one day with fear and trembling acknowledge it; as S. *Paul* plainly tells the Hebrews; ſaying, *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation.* Heb. 10. 26, 27.

Now that we may the better lead a new life before God, we muſt conſider that to the

direction of a Christian life, three things are to be known of us.

1. What we are to pray for.
2. What we ought to believe.
3. What we are to do,

The First being rightly known, affords us a perfect direction for our Hope: the second for our Faith: the third for our Piety.

Th first we have fully set down in the Lords Prayer, composed by Christ himself as a most exact rule for all our prayers.

The second in the Creed, which containeth the Articles of our Faith, contained in the Doctrine of the Apostles; called therefore the Apostles Creed. The

The third in the Tenne Commandements, written by the finger of God himself, and revealed unto us in his holy Word, to be our direction both for our holinesse towards God, and our Charity towards our neighbours.

These three rules of our life (the Lords Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandements) are daily repeated of those of the meaner and more simple sort, but yet (God knowes) not so well understood, as they should be, by divers to whom God hath given a greater measure of knowledge: never did our Land, yea almost every house, more freely abound with fruitful and comfortable

fortable expositiour upon these rules, than now they do; yet who looks so farre into them, as to know thereby the full extent of any of them? Some few indeed there are (whereof God increase the number) who make a conscionable use of those good meanes of Salvation: whereas others are well content, yea with delight desire to read (and that upon the best dayes) vain and idle discourses, which are so farre from furthering us in the way of Salvation, as that (like Tares) they choak the Word of God, and hinder the growth thereof, as we too often see by our daily experience. There is indeed a time for all

things

things; for pleasure as well as profit: but shall we spend the best of our time, yea (as some doe most miserably) the greatest part of our time in such vanities, and altogether neglect those good helps for our direction; esteeming them too plain and homely, or not pleasant enough for our witty inventions, and acute judgments? Let such know, that they, which thus neglect their own good, are guilty to themselves of a twofold crime.

1. Of unnatural wrong unto their own souls, in stopping their eyes from beholding the light of salvation, which otherwise would shine unto them; dealing herein as

injuriously with themselves, as Papist do with their deceived Laity, training them up in ignorance and blind devotion.

2. Of a twofold ingratitude: 1. Towards those painfull Authours, which (like fruitfull lights) have spent themselves for the directing others, whose labours doe well deserve to be accepted amongst us: and we, shall prove our selves but unthankful members of the Church, wherein we live if we make not that good use of those lights, for which they were intended.

Secondly, (which is the greatest) we shew our selves unthankful towards GOD him-

himself, who hath in mercy raised up such meanes for the helping of our infirmities; whereof others, better deserving than our selves, have been destitute. Having therefore such helps so freely offered unto us, let us (if we desire to live more righteously before God) use them more carefully than we have done: endeavouring in the first place to know what is contained in each Petition of the Lords Prayer; that so, when we pray, we may know what that is, for which we pray; and secondly, for our Faith, to know the full extent of every Article thereof; that so we may truly understand what this is, which we con-

fess we believe: and because both of these are little available, except our piety be such as it ought to be, let us especally be exercised in the Commandements of God; that thereby we may understand what we are commanded, and what forbidden. These are the direct courses which every true-hearted Christian ought to take, and which will one day prove truly comfortable, when others, vain and frivolous deceive us.

But because our Piety and Religious beheavour is the cheifest thing required on our part, unto the leading of a new life, let us further see what rules we may yet observe for the directing thereof.

This

This Piety of ours is seen in these two things. 1. Our Words. 2. Our Works and Actions.

As for our Words, we should follow the counsels of Saint *Paul* to the Ephesians, which is, that we avoid in our talk *all filthiness, all foolish talking and jestings which are not convenient.* Eph. 5. 4. and he giveth a very good reason for it. 1 Cor. 15. 33. *because evil communications corrupt good manners*; and that oftentimes both in the speaker and hearer. But some will say, what? must we never use any pleasant discourses? no jesting at all? yes, there is a time for that also, so it be according to the rule of Saint

Peter,

Peter, such *as God may thereby be glorified*, 1 Pet. 4. 11. other waies we may not: stir up our mindes we may to an honest chearfulness by civil and modest jesting; but obscene and prophane, which Saint *Paul* calls filthiness, vain and idle, which he termes foolish talking, and jesting, which is not convenient; such I say, *ought not to be once named amongst us as becometh Saints*; for hereby both speaker and hearer are often stirred up to loose and vain gestures, or at least wise to conceive and think of them, and so Gods name is much dishonoured. Miserable it is to observe how frequently such speeches do pass for current

under

under the assumed titles of merry discourses: but let us remember what our Saviour Christ hath said, *Mat.* 12. 36, 37. that *by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned, and that every idle word which we shall speak, we shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment*: Must we give an account of our words, and shall we not then be careful of them? Must we answer for every idle word, and shall we fill up our discourses with Blasphemies, with Obscene and scurrilous jestings? If we must give an account of them, certainly these will lye heavy upon us: Wherefore let us rather with *David*, set

a watch before our mouth, and bridle up our lips, that we offend not with our tongue: let us be careful that our words be such, as *Solomon* commandeth *Prov.* 25. 11. *Fitly spoken, which are like Apples of gold in pictures of silver*; that is, such words, as contain wholesome matter; and are spoken in a comely and decent manner, are as acceptable and pleasant to the eare of a judicious hearer, as a silver pictures, adorned with golden apples, are unto the eye of the beholder.

For our Works, we must as S. *Paul* counselleth *walk as children of the light, ever proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*, Eph. 5. 8, 10. *Having*

ving our conversation honest among men, that they seeing our good works, may glorify God thereby.

How to direct both our Words and Actions aright, we must cheifly observe these two things 1. How to avoid that which is evil in both. 2. How to seek and obtain that which is good.

To avoid that which is evil, four rules are especially to be observed.

The First concerns the beginnigs of evil; namely, that we watch and pray, according to our Saviours counsell and practice, (*Mat.* 26. 41. *Lest we enter into temptation*, and so be drawn away to sinne against God; for of

our

our ſelves we are prone thereunto, and unable to avoid it: and if it go ſo far that we be once tempted to ſin, and feel in us any motion thereunto, we ſhould endeavour to reſiſt this temptation in the beginning; and reaſon thus with our ſelves; Did not I lately receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, where I had a full pardon of all my ſinnes (paſt ſealed unto me) and where I vowed and promiſed to lead a new life before God, how then can I do this thing, and break my promiſe with God? I have put off my coat of ſinne, and therefore I may not (I will not) put it on again: thus ought we to reſiſt temptations at the firſt, leſt

leſt they get the dominion over us.

The ſecond rule concerns the occaſion of evil, which we muſt neceſſarily avoid, if we deſire to avoid the evil it ſelf.

The occaſions are diverſe, but eſpecially theſe two.

1. Idleneſs, from which proceed many (and theſe ſometimes hainous and crying) ſinnes; which the Son of *Syrach* calleth therefore *the teacher of much evil*, Eccleſ. 33. 27. To avoid this, we muſt be careful to imploy our ſelves diligently in that vocation wherein God hath placed us; for otherwiſe the Devil will be ſure to take an occaſion to tempt even the beſt

best of us; as we see in *David*, who was a man after Gods own heart; and yet, when he was walking on the roof of his house (while *Joab* and the rest were in the battle) he was tempted to commit adultery with *Bathsheba* the wife of *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. And how many do we daily see drawn away to lasciviousness, drunkenness, and such like vices by this occasion? Let us therefore carefully exercise our selves in our Vocation, that the Devil may not have an opportunity to set upon us.

2. Bad Company, than which nothing almost is more foreable to draw us away to that which is evil:

Let

Let *Joseph* but live in *Pharaohs* Court, and he shall soon learn to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*, Gen. 42. 15. and *if Israel abide in Shittim, the people will soon commit whoredome with the daughters of Moab*, *Num.* 25. 1. wherefore God commandeth his people to *go out of Babylon lest they be partakers of their sins*, *Rev.* 18. 4. And often are we partakers of other mens sins, by frequenting their society: yea, (which is miserable to observe) diverse of ingenuous disposition and civil behaviour, have by degrees been drawn away to looseness and riot, by associating themselves unfortunately with vain and dissolute persons.

And

And we may herein obſerve the policy of our enemy the Devil; who, when he findeth any man well diſpoſed of himſelf, and not ready to yeild to others temptations, will beſet him (if he can poſſibly) with this ſnare, that ſo he may either by the wicked perſwaſions, or bad examples of others, ſteal away his heart, and allure him to that which is evil, which ſhould be a forcible Caveat unto us, to make us heedful what company we fall into, and with whom we acquaint our ſelves, if we have any care of our ſouls: ſeaſonable is the counſel of *Solomon* herein, who adviſeth us, 1. Concerning the examples of others,

not

not to conform our ſelves unto them *by walking in their waies, but to avoid and paſs away*, Prov. 4. 15. 2. Concerning their allurements, by no means to harken unto them; *if ſinners intice thee, conſent thou not*, Prov. 1. 10. If they ſay, come let us take our pleaſure in this or that ſort, let us go to ſuch a place, where we may freely do what we will: *If they thus draw thee, walk not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their paths.* 3. As for familiarity with others, he adviſeth us to *make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man not to go.* Why? *leſt thou learn his way, and get a are unto thy ſoul.* Prov. 22.

24,

24, 25. Wilt thou avoid Gameing, Swearing, *&c.* then ſhun that company wherein thoſe vices are practiſed, or elſe thou wilt rather encreaſe them in thee. But ſome will ſay, ſuch an one is my familiar friend, and ſhall I leave him? that will be taken unkindly; ſhall I get my ſelf diſcredit, where I may avoid it? Yes, be he never ſo near unto thee, yet if he in his courſes forſake God, forſake thee; yet thou mayeſt therein ſhew thy ſelf a very friend to him, in winning him from his evil waies by thy forſaking of him; for ſo ſaith Saint *Paul.* 2. Theſ. 3. 14. *If any man obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with*

with him, that he may be ashamed: It may be when he seeth thee leave him, he will begin to think of his bad life, and so be ashamed of it, and by degrees leave it; therefore leave bad company for their sakes also, as well as thine own.

The third Rule is, how we may restrain our selves when we are about to undertake any sinful action: and that is by setting before our eyes this Caveat, *God sees: for his eyes are over all*, Prov. 15. 3. & therefore whatsoever we do we should consider that we do it in his presence: which, being conscionably considered, cannot but breed in us both reverence and watchfulness, reverence in respect of his Majesty:

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watchfulness, in respect of his all-seeing eye, that we offend him not, who will espye in us the least fault, be it never so secretly kept from the world.

Again, consider how merciful *God* hath ever been unto thee, in delivering thee from this or that danger, this or that sin, whereinto thou must necessarily have fallen, if he had not upheld thee: and then answer the Devil when he tempteth thee as *Joseph* did his wicked Mistriss; *how can I do this wickedness and sinne against my* GOD? God hath been thus and thus merciful unto me, and shall I yet offend him and provoke him to anger? God forbid.

The

The Fourth Rule is for our direction, when we are fallen into any ſin, which is this: When we are overtaken with any ſin (as who is not every day?) we ſhould preſently lament it, and not ſuffer it to go on any farther, leſt it come to a cuſtome, and ſo ſtick faſt in us: this is a difference which *Solomon* putteth between the Righteous and the Wicked. *Prov.* 24. 16. *A juſt man*, ſaith he, *falleth ſeven times and riſeth up again, but the wicked ſhall fall into miſchief*: the juſt man, though he fall into any ſin, riſeth again by repentance, but the wicked ſinketh deeper down, even to the pit of diſtruction.

These are the chiefest rules to be observed for the avoiding of that which is evil.

The next thing, which we must look into, is, how we may obtain that which is good: Here we must principally observe these Two things. 1. Make use of all occasions thereunto. 2. Make conscience of every good duty. As for the first, we must first, according to the example of S. *Paul*, Phil. 3. 14. *use all diligence that we may press towards the mark*, still endeavouring to be better: and when we find our selves deficient in the performance of any good duty (as God knows we are in all) we should do the same again, and endeavour to perform

form it more fervently, that so we may come to a greater measure of goodnesse. Again, we should gladly embrace the company of good men, that by their example and advise we may be brought to a sense and feeling of those sins which we commit; counting it a great blessing of God, if thereby we at any time be croſs'd in those sins, to which we are most addicted, as gameing, &c. and ever esteem best of that company, not where our ears may be filled with prophane jestings, or tickled with superfluous conceits; but where our corruptions may be most roundly reproved; esteeming them our best feiends, that will most plainly and faith-

fully put us in mind of our errours; which is the counsel of S. *Paul* to the *Thessalonians I beseech you* (saith he, 1. *Thess.* 5. 12, 13.) *to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*: which may be our direction for esteeming both of our familiar friends, and of our teachers; both which (if faithful) labour for our good in the Lord, by admonishing us, and both thereby deserve from us a true regard as a recompence of this their love: therefore if any man desire to be furthered in good duties, let him testifie it by loving such men.

2. If

2. If we desire to obtain that which is good, we must be careful that we make conscience (as of avoiding every evil) so of doing every good duty, be it never so little, *endeavouring* with St. Paul *to have alwaies a conscience void of offence towards God and men:* Acts 24. 16. and labouring to keep not only some, but all *Gods* Commandements, according to *Davids* wish, *Psal.* 119. 5,6. *O that my waies were made so direct, that I might keep thy Statutes, so shall I not be confounded, while I have respect to all thy Commandements:* Let us not deceive our selves in thinking it sufficient, that we obey the Sabbath, and that we offend not God by swearing

ſwearing, ſtealing, or ſuch like hainous offences: and yet in the mean time make no conſcience of a lye for our commodity, or of vain & idle diſcourſes for delight, for if we thus do, it is certainly an argument of a bad heart.

But ſome perhaps will ſay, If I thus endeavour to carry my ſelf in all things, if I now and then do not give a little way, I ſhall bee accounted too preciſe and curious in matters which I need not. Be it ſo, yet be willing to undergo that cenſure, and eſteem it ſafer to offend ungodly men by thy good life, then a righteous *God* by thy bad life: and though others account it too much preciſeneſs, yet do thou

not

not ſo: but rather conſider that *God* commandeth us to *keep his precepts diligently*, Pſal. 119.4. If diligently, then certainly there is nothing in his precepts ſuperfluous; nothing, which we may do, or not do, but every one, though of never ſo ſmall matter, is to be performed of us: whoſoever therefore ſhall endeavour to his power to keep the Commandements of God in every thing, is ſo far from being too preciſe, that he doth but what he is commanded.

To theſe Rules, for avoiding of evil, and ſeeking of good, we may adde one more, as the rule of all the reſt, and of our whole life, and that is the word of God, which alone

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is able to direct us in the way to ſalvation, as *David* teſtifieth, *Pſal.* 119. 9. *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? even by ruling himſelf after thy word:* Wherefore let us carefully read, meditate and confer about this Word, and that often; accounting (as well we may) every day loſt, wherein we learn not ſomething out of it, ever deſiring more & more to be inſtructed therein, and account it a great bleſſing of God, that we have the uſe of it ſo freely to direct us in the way of Salvation. Neither let any man think himſelf ſo learned, that he needeth no farther inſtruction; for the beſt of us comes ſhort of *David*, and yet he prayed

ſtill

ſtill to *be inſtructed in the Word of the Lord*, as we may ſee throughout the 119. *Pſalm.* Again, if we did know more than we do, yet we are dull in the performance of what we know; and therefore we have need to read the ſame again and again, to ſtir us up to daily a practice hereof: but that we may ſo uſe the Word of God, as that it may be unto us the ſavour of life unto life; let us at all times, when we are about to read it, lift up our hearts to God by prayer, that he may give a bleſſing to our endeavours, without which whatſoever we do in this, or any other thing, it will be ſo far from being profitable unto us, as that it will

will rather prove our ruine in the end.

He which ſhall thus ſet his heart to ſerve the Lord by denying ungodlyneſs and worldly luſts, by liveing honeſtly, righteouſly, and ſoberly in this preſent world; he, which ſhall thus carefully receive the Sacrament in a right manner, and hear the Word with diligence, devoting himſelf to God by prayer in all things, which he doth: he which ſhall thus make conſcience of his waies, in every thing; the bleſſing of *God* reſt upon him, as it needs muſt, and that peace of conſcience, (which no man knoweth but he that enjoys) ever attend him here, and everlaſting peace, and happineſſe crown him hereafter. *Amen.*

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